DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 387 677 CE 070 077

AUTHOR	Mikulecky, Larry; Lloyd, Paul
TITLE	The Impact of Workplace Literacy Programs: A New Model for Evaluating the Impact of Workplace Literacy Programs. NCAL Brief.
INSTITUTION	National Center on Adult Literacy, Philadelphia, PA.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO	NCAL-BP95-06
PUB DATE	13 Mar 95
NOTE	3p.; For the full report, see ED 348 579.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; *Evaluation Methods; *Literacy Education; Models; *Outcomes of Education; Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation

ABSTRACT

An evaluation model for workplace literacy programs was developed and applied at two industrial plants. Development of the model included a literature review and consultation with plant managers. The model included interviews, questionnaires, Cloze tests, class observation, plant-gathered productivity indexes, and supervisor ratings. The evaluation found that literacy instruction has produced some improvement in all areas assessed. However, gains appeared to be limited to areas directly addressed in class, and there was apparently no transfer of learning into areas not covered by instruction. Hence, specific goals need to be established for workplace literacy programs that encourage motivation and independence, as these are likely to spur increased engagement by workers in literacy-related activities. The study concluded that an impact assessment model that is broad-scale and rigorous, employing learner interviews, tests, questionnaires, company records, and supervisor ratings, can be performed even with limited time and resources. (KC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 387 677

BRIEF

The Impact of Workplace Literacy Programs: A New Model for Evaluating the Impact of Workplace Literacy Programs

Larry Mikulecky
Paul Lloyd
Indiana University, Bloomington

Based on NCAL Technical Report TR93-02
155 pages, $13.00

BP95-06 MARCH 13, 1995

KEY FINDINGS:

- Workplace literacy programs improved reading practices at work only in those areas that related directly to the class attended. Reading away from work improved only for students in classes where home reading was specifically encouraged.
- Classes that utilized home materials in teaching improved the home literacy practices of learners. The benefits, however, did not appear to carry over beyond the actual materials used.
- An impact assessment model that is broad-scale and rigorous, employing learner interviews, tests, questionnaires, company records, and supervisor ratings, can be performed even with limited time and resources.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Workplace literacy programs improved reading practices at work only in those areas that related directly to the class attended. Reading away from work improved only for students in classes where home reading was specifically encouraged.
- Classes that utilized home materials in teaching improved the home literacy practices of learners. The benefits, however, did not appear to carry over beyond the actual materials used.
- An impact assessment model that is broad-scale and rigorous, employing learner interviews, tests, questionnaires, company records, and supervisor ratings, can be performed even with limited time and resources.

INTRODUCTION

Even though millions of dollars have been invested in workplace literacy programs, few programs have been evaluated well. Typically, evaluations have relied on anecdotes, learner satisfaction questionnaires, and standardized basic skills tests. An effective evaluation, however, should consist of two stages: formative and summative. Formative evaluation takes place during the beginning and middle stages of program operation and involves identifying problem areas while they can still be corrected. Summative evaluation takes place at the end of the program and assesses how well the program has met its goals.

To help meet the need for comprehensive and rigorous evaluation models, NCAL funded a project that developed and applied a model that meets the above criteria and that can be applied to most workplace programs. This report describes the model and presents the results of an assessment of two workplace programs.

METHODOLOGY

Two industrial plants were chosen as test sites. The research literature was reviewed and plant managers were consulted in order to compile evaluation instruments and techniques. The methods incorporated into the model were interviews, questionnaires, Cloze tests (custom-designed, fill-in-the-blanks exercises), class observation, plant-gathered productivity indices, and supervisor ratings.

Procedures for data gathering differed for each instrument, but in all cases data were gathered before and after each course. Data analysis included coding, scoring, and categorizing items, and applying statistical tests to detect improvements.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 070077

IMPLICATIONS

Even with limited resources, it is possible to undertake an effective evaluation of the impact of workplace programs on the literacy of workers and their families, and on workers' job productivity. This study finds that literacy instruction has produced some improvement in all areas assessed. However, gains appear to be limited to areas directly addressed in class, and there is apparently no transfer of learning into areas not covered by instruction. Hence, specific goals need to be established for workplace literacy programs that encourage motivation and independence, as these are likely to spur increased engagement by workers in literacy-related activities.

FURTHER READING

Kutner, M., Sherman, R., Webb, L., & Fisher, C. (1991). *A review of the national workplace literacy program*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Budget and Evaluation.

Mikulecky, L. J., & D'Adamo-Weinstein, L. (1991). How effective are workplace literacy programs? In M. Taylor, G. Lewe, & J. Draper, (Eds.), *Basic skills for the workplace*. Toronto: Culture Concepts, Inc.

Mikulecky, L. J. (1990). Basic skills impediments to communication between management and hourly employees. *Management Communication Quarterly, 3*(4), 452–473.

To order hard copy of the full report, please specify report number, title, and price as listed on the front page of this Brief.

Payment: All orders must be prepaid (U.S. Dollars only, please). Make check or money orders **PAYABLE TO "NCAL/UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA."** All sales are final. For further information, call NCAL Dissemination at 215-898-2100, (FAX) 215-898-9804, or (E-mail) **ncal@literacy.upenn.edu**.

Please allow 3 weeks for delivery. For foreign mail and special handling, contact NCAL Dissemination.

Send check and shipping information to:

NATIONAL CENTER ON ADULT LITERACY
Dissemination
3910 Chestnut Street
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-3111

To acquire an electronic copy of this report free of charge via NCAL's Internet Gopher, point your client at **litserver.literacy.upenn.edu**.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

REPRODUCTION BASIS

☐ This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.

☒ This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").